



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees



December 2011
Vol. 8, No. 4

www.townofchapelhill.org

On the Front Burner



Rog

Priority Budgeting. Continuing Recession. Property values declining. Chapel Hill 2020. What do these words mean if you are a Town employee?

These words are about the future and how we think about it. The current difficult financial times are an opportunity to think together about the Town's priorities and how we continue to sustain the high level of service you provide for the Town. With so many things unknown in today's world about future finances, however, it can be a scary time for those of us who work for the Town.

The Town Council has clearly said that they know excellent service comes from excellent employees. I believe we are a dedicated, professional Team that can do amazing things. Consistent with our Values of RESPECT, my first priority is to keep that Team intact. I believe our actions in these difficult times manifest RESPECT. Throughout the recession which began in 2008, we have not laid anybody off; we have minimized changes to the benefits the Town provides for current employees; we have invested in a healthcare clinic, an ombuds program and training for supervisors. While we have not been able to provide salary increases, we have provided one time payments equal to 2 percent of the average employee's salary for the last two years. I will put that performance up against any other Town's approach to containing costs and looking to the future. Rather than balance the budget on our employees, we have invested in the future.

If we are to continue to keep our

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Wayne Blair

Ombuds Office Open for Business

919-886-0287

wblair@townofchapelhill.org

The Town's Ombuds office is open for business! The idea of a Town Ombuds was generated by groups of Town staff that were meeting to discuss an alternative to the Town's formal channels for reporting and resolving problems in the workplace.

Wayne Blair will serve as the Town's interim Ombuds. Many of you may have already met Wayne when he visited your department over the past few months. Wayne currently serves as UNC's Ombuds and will be working with the Town on a contract basis until a permanent Town Ombuds is identified.

The Ombuds is available to provide confidential and informal assistance to Town employees regarding workplace issues, concerns, problems or disputes. The Ombuds is neutral, confidential and provides assistance, not advocacy.

An Ombuds is not an advocate or a means to work around the Town's established systems of supervision and dispute management. Instead, the Ombuds provides information and shares options. Data collected about trends and issues would be shared with the Town Manager, without sharing names, to inform Town policies. Again, the assistance

Value in the Spotlight

Communication



Catherine Lazorko photo

provided is confidential.

For more information about the Town's Ombuds Program, to schedule a meeting with Wayne at his Town office, or if you are interested in having Wayne visit your department, please contact Wayne confidentially at 919-886-0287 or by email at wblair@townofchapelhill.org.

"I want to make it easy for people to access me when needed."

COMING UP

Saturday, Dec. 10: Chapel Hill-Carrboro Holiday Parade, 10 a.m.

Monday, Dec. 12: Fire promotional ceremony

Wednesday, Dec. 14: Cal Horton Service Award Ceremony, 11 a.m., Hargraves Center

Thursday, Dec. 15: Chapel Hill 2020, 7-9 p.m., East Chapel Hill High School

Dec. 22-23, 26: Town Holidays.

Jan. 9-13: Martin Luther King Celebration Week for employees



A groundbreaking ceremony for the Chapel Hill Public Library Expansion Project will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 17. The public is invited.

In Brief



Nate Davis (Parks and Recreation) has been chosen to receive the 2011 Cal Horton Service Award. This award recognizes

distinguished service by Town of Chapel Hill employees with a monetary award. Nominees were honored and the recipient announced at the Nov. 18 Longevity Breakfast at Hargraves Center. The award will be presented at a ceremony at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 14, at the Hargraves Center, 216 N. Roberson St.

The award review committee would like to recognize the nominees for the 2011 award contest. They were **Florentine "Flo" Miller** (Manager), **Chris Bradley** (Fire), **Angie Turner** (Public Works), **Carmen Cole** (Transit), **Harold Scarborough** (Public Works), **Richard Terrell** (Public Works), **Paul Dodson** (Transit), **Mike Taylor** (Public Works—Engineering), **Larry Tucker** (Public Works—Engineering), **Chris Blue** (Police) and **Flora Parrish** (Police).



Keith Porterfield (Fire) has been appointed to Battalion Chief. His experience and insight will serve as a great addition to

the command structure of the Fire Department. Congratulations a well-deserved promotion!



TOWNtalk is produced by the Communications and Public Affairs Department
Editorial/Graphics: Catherine Lazorko,
Melanie Miller

Sculpture Visions

Have you noticed the 12 new sculptures around town? The one pictured at right is located at the Post Office/Courthouse, 179 E. Franklin St. These artworks comprise the annual Sculpture Visions exhibition, where local and regional artists working in a variety of styles, themes and media are selected to display their best pieces in Chapel Hill for 11 months. Local partners such as University Mall and the Estes Business Park also sponsor and host sculptures in their publicly-accessible spaces.

These artworks create a sense of beauty, place and uniqueness for the town's residents and visitors, and their installation and display would not be possible without the generous assistance and creative problem solving of the Public Works Department. Thank you

Relic by Dana Gingras, at Peace & Justice Plaza



Shelton Burnette, Charles Mitchell, Warren Edwards, Audrey Gattis, Rezell Alston, Rickey McKinney, Wayne Thompson and Kenneth Jones!



Jacob Sinkiewicz (Fire) and his wife Paige welcomed a beautiful baby boy on Nov. 18. Carter

Griffin Sinkiewicz weighed in at 6 lbs 14 oz. Congrats to Jake and Paige!

Carl Rokos, James Wilkinson, Ron Powers and Shane Brown (all Transit) have achieved the Master Transit Bus Technician designation from the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). Only 398 mechanics have achieved this status nationwide (26 in North Carolina), six of whom work for Chapel Hill Transit. Congratulations Carl, James, Ron and Shane!

A **Fire Department** promotional ceremony will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 12, in the Council Chamber of Town Hall. Several department personnel will be recognized with awards for service or meritorious actions. All department personnel and families are invited to attend.

As part of recent fee changes, **SunTrust's regular checking account** requires both direct deposit and a minimum balance for account holders to avoid paying a monthly fee. But for Town employees, SunTrust offers free checking to those who opt for direct deposit, with no other requirements. If you have a SunTrust checking account and have direct deposit of your pay but you are charged a monthly fee, please contact Caren House, our SunTrust at Work Specialist, to find out how you can avoid these fees and possibly receive a credit if the fees were charged in error. Caren can be reached at 919-785-4126 or caren.house@suntrust.com.

Help **"Keep the Wreath Green"** by preventing home fires. During the holiday season, Fire Station #1 displays a wreath filled with green lights. For each residential fire through New Year's Day, a green bulb will be replaced with a red one. Our goal is to "Keep the Wreath Green" all season long.

To help prevent fires, choose flame-resistant materials; keep candles away from decorations and never leave candles unattended; turn off lights and extinguish candles when leaving; and choose live trees that are fresh and keep them well watered. Have a great holiday season by practicing fire safety every day and help us "Keep the Wreath Green!"

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Please recycle with white paper.



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The Employee Forum is an advisory committee to the Town Manager consisting of supervisory and non-supervisory employees who are elected by their peers. New employee representatives were elected to the Employee Forum during the election process held from September through November. The Employee Forum meets on the second Thursday of every month.

Congratulations to new members of the Employee Forum:

- Transit: **Wallace Alston, Nancy Hayes, Joe McMiller**
- Police: **Nate Chambers, Lacy Brock**
- Public Works: **Jeff Allen, Jason Staley**
- Housing: **Sabrina Farrar**
- Fire: **Melissa Holland**

On the Front Burner

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commitment to you, though, we need to work smarter. Chapel Hill 2020 will define the community's Vision and Values for the future. Priority budgeting will be one tool for focusing the Town's resources on achieving that Vision consistent with our Values. We need to focus on the services most valued by the community. We need to improve the way we do things so we can do them more efficiently. We need new ideas. Sometimes, we may need to modify what we do to meet the priorities. Our jobs may change to reflect the direction we must take for the future to survive. My goal is that you will still have a job and that we will continue to invest in you.

I will soon be arranging to talk with different groups of employees about the future and what it means for us. Take advantage of the opportunity. Bring your ideas and your questions. Together, we will continue to make it through the recession to another day with our Values intact.

SMT Notes

The following is a brief update of some of the items recently discussed by the Senior Management Team (SMT). These notes are posted on the Town's Intranet twice a month and can be accessed from your Town computer. To access the notes, type in "intranet" in your web browser, click "Published Documents" on the left-hand side of the page, then "SMT Meeting Notes" under the "Teams" column. To stay up-to-date on other Town news and activities, subscribe to Chapel Hill eNews by emailing info@townofchapelhill.org.

Kudos to Erin Kawamata (PW) and Christina Strauch (BMD): While reviewing staff recorders' notes from the various CH2020 theme groups, Roger noticed a lot of language used that may be confusing or difficult for a non-staff member who seldom uses such language to fully understand. He thought the notes would be more meaningful to the community if stated in a different way. "Translating" these notes was no easy task, but Erin and Christina gladly stepped up to the challenge. Their talents resulted in an excellent product that greatly clarified the notes, helping to bridge the communication gap. This is a reminder to look everywhere for hidden talent and nurture it. We need to identify leaders for the future.

Town Property: A recent event involving the disposal of Town property incorrectly is a red flag that we need to be vigilant about our processes for the proper disposal of property owned and /or in the possession of the Town. Strict rules and laws govern this matter. Some older practices may not be legal under current law. Roger has initiated a review of our policies

and procedures regarding the disposal of the Town's assets. He expects department heads to be aware of and approve disposal policies and practices in your departments.

Council Retreat: The Council Retreat will be held Feb. 3-4. The Council Retreat Planning Committee consists of three Council Members (Donna Bell, Matt Czajkowski, Gene Pease) and two SMT Members (**JB Culpepper, Butch Kisiah**), as well as Roger Stancil and the Retreat facilitator, Vi Lyles.

Council Orientation: The newly elected Council Member, Lee Storrow, will join the SMT at its meeting on Dec. 15. The purpose of this meeting will be to orient Lee, providing him an opportunity to meet each of the SMT members, learn a bit more about each department's responsibilities, and participate in a mock Council Meeting to learn more about Council procedures, etc.

Rae Buckley's Transition to HRD: **Rae Buckley** recently moved into a new position on temporary assignment in the HRD Department. She will fully transition into this new role at the beginning of the New Year. Her two main tasks over the next 12 months are to redevelop the Town's HRD policies and to provide support to Frances with management of the department.

Presentation of the Fiscal Conditions Report: At the Dec. 1 Chapel Hill 2020 meeting, Roger opened the meeting with a presentation that focused on the Town's fiscal condition. He shared this presentation at the SMT meeting. This presentation will be available on the CH2020 website: www.2020buzz.org.

Compliments



Javius Newman (Transit) was complimented by Roger Lundblad for waiting while he hurried to make it to the bus. "First, this fellow 'went the extra mile' but more important he obviously pays a lot of attention to what is going on around him. Great job."

Stan Norwood (Transit) was complimented by Dillion Hubert for being pleasant and providing great service. "Stan does an amazing job, he is always pleasant and is a breath of fresh air in the mornings."

Tim Sawyer (Inspections) was commended by Myrna Schwartz for being helpful and pleasant. "When he came to inspect the house he was polite and informative. He made what I thought would be an intimidating project a positive learning experience. I must also say that all of my contacts with other staff members were also positive."

Happy Holidays, Employees!

Give a gift to yourself for the Holidays!

If you have not already – consider giving yourself a gift of \$25 during the holiday season. Not only will you receive a health screening, you will have the opportunity to meet with me for a free 30 minute individualized health consultation. We all have some aspect of our health that could use improvement. We can discuss diet, exercise, any chronic diseases you may have, stress, anxiety, or sleep problems. The process is simple. Go online to schedule an appointment to have your blood drawn. While you are here we can schedule the follow up consultation (review visit).

So far I have loved working with the employees of the Town of Chapel Hill and really want to meet more of you! I am here for you and can offer assessment, health coaching, diagnosis and treatment along with some much needed encouragement. Come see me today!

—Jennie Petruney, Nurse Practitioner,
UNC Family Medicine
www.uncwellnessatwork.org

Stuff the Bus

Help us fill a bus with food and clothing for those in need! Drop your donation of non-perishable food items or gently used outerwear or coats in a donation box. Santa will make the rounds in a Chapel Hill Transit bus to pick up donations on Dec. 16, and our donations will be delivered to IFC Community Services on Dec. 21. Donations boxes are located in several departments:

- Transit
- Public Works
- Planning
- Business Management
- Manager's Office
- HRD/CaPA
- Town Hall Employee Lounge
- Police
- Library

If you have questions please call Tyffany Neal at 969-4949

Have you taken the HRA?

Fun HRA Facts:

- HRA can be taken any time – you will still receive your \$25 gift card
- HRA consists of two visits – The first to have your blood pressure and weight measured along with a blood draw (you do not have to be fasting). The second is to review your results and have a 30 minute consultation to review your overall health and develop your wellness goals. Many employees have found this visit very helpful and informative.
- You will need an appointment for both visits. The easiest way to make an appointment is on the Wellness at Work portal – www.uncwellnessatwork.org
- You can also call 968-2796 to make an appointment

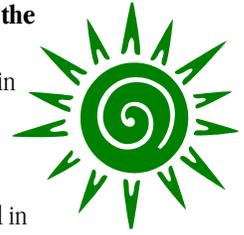
Did you know about the incentive program?

You can earn up to \$225 in one year!

1. HRA - \$25 for first lab visit
2. \$100 to meet your goal in six months
3. \$100 to maintain your goal for an additional six months

Goals can be in one of five categories:

Blood pressure,
Diabetes, High Cholesterol,
Weight and Smoking
Meet with Jennie for the HRA review visit to find out if you qualify!



Green Tips

Holiday Shopping As A Community Service?

Holiday shopping can be stressful. Figuring out what to buy is hard enough, but knowing where to get it can be even more difficult. When the big box retailers came along, holiday shopping got a little easier with the “one stop shop” experience. Then internet commerce came on the scene. For many of us, life seems to be getting busier and internet shopping is a very efficient way to knock things off that holiday list.

But consider this. How and where you spend your money can influence the community in which you live. “Leakage” is a term used to describe the effects of commerce when money

flows out of one community and into another. There are different degrees of leakage. For example, buying gifts on the internet ensures that none of your money will stay in the community unless some sales tax is collected or the product you’re buying is made locally. Purchasing gifts at a chain or big box store is a slight improvement on internet shopping, in that some of your money will stay here in employee wages and sales taxes. However, high leakage is typical of chain stores due to the transfer of sales revenue to a corporate headquarters. The best way for you to keep your money in the community is by purchasing gifts at local stores, so that the profit, wages and taxes all stay in your community and are then spent again.

Keeping the money local has an impact on community prosperity (e.g., jobs, wages, local investment, etc.), and it also adds to the tax base—which, of course, provides a significant source of the revenue used to pay local government salaries. So, by taking a little more time to do the holiday shopping in your town, remember to credit yourself for some community service as well. After all, isn’t it really supposed to be the season of giving?

—John Richardson, Sustainability Office

